

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 17-24 remain pending in the present application. Claims 20-24 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Applicant hereby affirms the election of the invention of Group I, claims 17-20, for prosecution in the present application. Claim 21-24 are withdrawn from consideration.

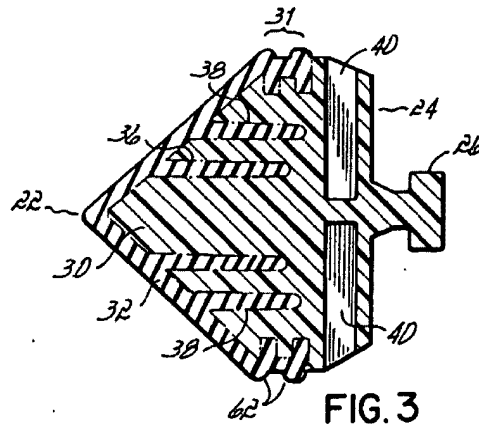
The specification has been amended above to comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §§ 119(e) and 120, so that the present application is entitled to claim the benefit of the earlier filed U.S. patent application. In particular, the specification has been amended to contain a specific reference to the parent application(s). Applicant appreciates the Examiner's careful attention to detail in noting that the filing date for the parent application was incorrectly noted in the previous amendment to the specification. The amendment to the specification provided above includes the correct filing date for the parent application. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the above amendment to the specification be approved and that the priority claim be acknowledged.

Claims 18 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicant respectfully submits that the above amendment to the claims correct the specific deficiencies cited by the Examiner. More specifically, claim 18 has been amended to clarify the description of the process for forming a mask seal having two flaps (a first flap molded to the mask body) and a second flap that overlies the first flap (See, e.g., flap 80 in FIG. 5 of the present application). Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that amendments to claim 18 be approved and the above rejection of claims 18 and 19 be withdrawn.

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art (page 1 of the specification) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,902,276 to Namey ("the '276 patent"). In addition, claims 18 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of the '276 patent, and in further view of U.S.

Patent No. 4,971,051 to Toffolon ("the '051 patent"). Finally, claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of the '276 patent, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 2,664,887 to Green ("the '887 patent"). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for the reasons presented below.

The '276 patent teaches a two-shot molding technique that is used to bond a rubber cover 32 over a hard core 30 - resulting on a plunger head for use in a syringe. A copy of FIG. 3 from the '276 patent is reproduced below for the Examiner's convenience. Those skilled in the art understand that in order to ensure a sufficient bond between two materials using the two-shot molding technique requires that there be a relatively large surface area (contacting area) between the rubber cover that is to be bonded to the hard core. For this reason, a plurality of cavities 36 and 38 are provided in the core. In the present invention, the seal is bonded to the mask body over a relative small area, namely the rim or peripheral edge of the mask body. See items 49 and 50 in FIG. 4B of the present application. Thus, applicant submits that one skilled in art would not be motivated to use the two-shot molding technique of the '276 patent because the sealing area is too small.



In addition, the bond between the seal and the mask body in the present invention must be an airtight bond. While the two-shot molding technique of the '276 patent is believed to provide a strong attachment between the two materials, one skilled in the art would not have appreciated whether this attachment would also be air-tight, especially given the relative small bonding area available in the mask body and seal configuration of the present invention. For

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these reasons, applicant submits that one skilled in the art of mask molding would not look to the two-shot injection molding technique used for syringes to solve the problems in the mask field, and would not be motivated to make the combination suggested by the Examiner.

For the reasons presented above, applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 17 is are not rendered obvious by the cited references. In addition, claims 18-20 are also not rendered obvious due to their dependency from independent claim 17. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the above rejections of claim 17-20 be withdrawn.

All objections and rejections have been addressed. It is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to the effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By Michael W. Haas

Michael W. Haas

Reg. No.: 35,174

Tel. No.: (724) 387-5026

Fax No.: (724) 387-5021

RESPIRONICS, INC.
1010 Murry Ridge Lane
Murrysville, PA 15668-8525